

**Testimony of Lee R. Keiser to Accelerate Action
on CIP #P501733, Bradley Blvd. (MD-191) Improvements Project**

Montgomery County Council Public Hearing, February 7, 2023 (1:30 p.m.)

Recommended FY24 Capital Budget & FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Amendments

Good afternoon President Glass, Vice President Friedson, and Councilmembers. I am Lee Keiser, and was a pre-pandemic president of the South Bradley Hills Neighborhood Association in District 1. My theme today is **ZOOM**, as I'm calling for accelerated action on the **Bradley Blvd. (MD-191) Improvements CIP** project, that's stuck in Final Design Stage. It's a prime case study in suburban "last-mile" challenges.

First, we need to **ZOOM** to start construction on this sidewalk/bikeway project, **P501733**, instead of delaying it until FY28 and beyond, per the County Executive's proposal. Here's why:

- This 1-mile stretch of Bradley Blvd. is a major commuting route; adding sidewalks and bikeways is referenced in the **1990 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan**, and supported in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan. Oddly, the project justification text omits the 1990 Master Plan.
- Zooming to construction would close the gap of a partial sidewalk along Bradley Blvd. that's closer to Bethesda's Central Business District, built nearly 30 years ago. This gap exists from Bradley at Barrett Lane (seen below), north to Wilson Lane (MD-188), which has sidewalks.



- Last month, RideOn Bus service was gratefully increased along Bradley Blvd. (Route 36), further evidence of this well-traveled transit route. Yet riders alighting onto Bradley Blvd. remain at increased risk without sidewalks.
- The County Executive/County Council’s joint Transportation Priorities Letter (Feb. 7, 2023) to Maryland Dept. of Transportation Secretary Paul Wiedefeld cites as a top priority design and construction of “Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Implementation on State Highways.” The letter asks the State to “increase funding to address sidewalk gaps, crosswalk conditions and other issues in support of the County’s Vision Zero Action Plan.” Accelerating construction on CIP #P501733 aligns with this priority.

Second, we need to ZOOM In on the Bradley Blvd. Improvements project, and study concurrent efforts:

- Another CIP, #P507017, **Intersection and Spot Improvements**, will add left-turn lanes to the MD-191/MD-188 (Bradley Blvd./Wilson Lane) intersection, a traffic safety enhancement also recommended in the 1990 B-CC Master Plan. But the intersection project scope regarding stormwater management falls one block short of where the State Highway Administration’s research in 2017 (cover page, below) documented the worst-affected area for flooding.



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Pete K. Rahn
Secretary
Gregory Slater
Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: MR. BRIAN YOUNG
DISTRICT ENGINEER, DISTRICT 3

ATTN: MR. TOM FOUNTAIN
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ENGINEER, DISTRICT 3

FROM: MS. DANA HAVLIK *Dana Havlik*
DIVISION CHIEF, HIGHWAY HYDRAULICS DIVISION

SUBJECT: MD 191 – HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS ALONG SOUTH BRADLEY HILLS
NEIGHBORHOOD
SHA REFERENCE NO.: 17-DM-MO-007

DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2017

Since then, interim fixes have been implemented here with limited success. Without Zooming In and coordinating these two CIP stormwater plans informed by SHA research, the worst-affected area will quickly deteriorate even further during this decade, exposing rainy-day Bradley Blvd. travelers to increased road hazards (see Bradley Blvd. photo, next page).



- ZOOMING In also reveals a new, adjacent, Kenwood Park Community Sidewalk request, whose first County DOT meeting will be March 1, 2023. This 600-home community's eastern border is MD-191/Bradley Blvd. Their sidewalk request covers multiple streets, one of which (Durbin Rd., 20817) intersects Bradley Blvd. (to the east), and leads almost directly to Walt Whitman High School (to the west). Until the Bradley Blvd. CIP is constructed, the proposed Community sidewalk on this critical East-West residential street would end at sidewalk-less Bradley Blvd.

Third, it's also important to ZOOM Out.

- Little Falls Parkway, and the Capital Crescent Trail, are both a stone's throw from Bradley Blvd. The Parkway is an evolving case study to optimize safety for multi-modal travelers. The Parks Dept.'s next Little Falls Parkway community meeting is Feb. 15.
- But Parkway and Trail users who travel along the no-sidewalks, no-bikeways section of Bradley Blvd. (seen below) do so at great risk.



Thus, the latest proposed construction delay for Bradley Blvd. safety enhancements – while advocacy and public resources are increasingly devoted to ensuring safety of Parkway and Trail users – is of great concern. Moreover, proximity of neither the Parkway nor the Trail is referenced in the Bradley Blvd. project justification.

Finally, across CIP Transportation projects, the Council's Government Operations (GO) Committee should ZOOM Out to examine why Project Description Forms' (PDFs) comprehensiveness is erratic: missing facts such as Master Plan years, specific community attributes, adjacent Community Sidewalk initiatives, and adjacent CIP project scopes. At last month's county demographic update, the Council learned that barely half of county households speak only English at home. Thus, PDFs should rely less on narratives, while featuring: (1) maps of both the main project scope and nearby community destinations, with simple icons; (2) public-meeting calendars for adjacent projects, and (3) historical timelines.

To help fulfill the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act, the Community Advocacy Institute; and perhaps Regional Services Centers' Advisory Boards, could integrate CIP transportation projects into teaching lessons and on-boarding, respectively. Empowering a broader swath of county residents to advocate for transportation safety infrastructure in their communities should go hand-in-hand with the Council's capital budget decisions.

In conclusion, Montgomery County state roads are often our communities' Main Streets, but long-standing CIP public-facing communication and evaluation processes may inadvertently silo state road projects. We need to ZOOM to accelerate construction on Bradley Blvd., per P501733; while also honoring ZOOM-In and ZOOM-Out policy mantras in multiple CIP evaluations. Thank you for your consideration.

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